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6. The Pykóbye

The Pqkóbye (= Piocobgêz, Paicogês), the most warlike of all the Timbira, occupied the region east and northeast of the Krîkatí, beyond the upper Rio Grajahú and more particularly the district watered by its western affluent, the Sant' Anna. The Neobrazilians nowadays generally call them Gaviões; their Timbira designation is derived from pqkóp or pǫkóbo, a species of *Dioscorea*—among the Põrekamekra Pohl heard the form Bukobuji. The Krîkatí, Kre'pq'mkateye, and occasionally the Rąmkõ'kamekra call them Põpéykateye (those on the beautiful [or: true] steppe), as explained above (p. 1).

In Ribeiro's day they had five large villages, but possibly the Krîkatí were included in the count. At all events they were sufficiently strong and warlike to defeat all the bandeiras dispatched against them.[a]

In 1804 they compelled Francisco Alves dos Santos' bandeira to set at liberty the prisoners taken in their first attack and the bandeira itself to seek safety in precipitate flight. Ten years later they destroyed Manoel de Assumpçao's bandeira, a single wounded man escaping out of a company of forty. According to one account[b] this defeat occurred on June 28, 1813, and there were eighty-six dead. What I myself heard was that the massacre took place in a defile when the bandeira tried to storm the Serra da Desordem, to which the Pqkóbye had retired, from its east tip. This Serra is not a range of several hundred kilometers, as the maps would lead one to suppose, but one of the many isolated steep knolls rising somewhat north of the road between Grajahú and Porto Franco from the Tocantins watershed, which now and then is barely perceptible.

Not long after this event the Pqkóbye (in 1814 according to Ribeiro; according to Carlota Carvalho in 1813) attacked the settlement of Porto da Chada, then only three years old, at the site of what is now Grajahú. They burned both the houses and the boats in the harbor; thirty-eight persons perished in this onslaught. A punitive expedition composed of bandeiras from São Pedro de Alcantara and Pastos Bons was ignominiously repelled.

In 1849 the Gaviões are characterized as "ferozes e traiçoeiros" (wild and treacherous),[c] but about the middle of the century they began permanently peaceable relations with the neighboring Neobrazilians. In 1851 they and the Caracteges were put under the same directoria, which comprised the region of the Grajahú from Tapero Leopoldina at 4° 50′ S. latitude to Villa da Chapada (= Grajahú). Their number was then set at 1000.[d]

In 1858 there are listed fourteen peaceable villages, one of them credited with 1000 inhabitants, including 600 warriors (*sic*), and a chief who styled himself "governador." Another is said to have 800 people, including 350 able to bear arms, under the chief Belizario. Two others had a population of 600 each. In addition there were said to be numerous others in a wild state [the Western Gaviões]. Even assuming that these figures comprise the Krîkatí as well, I find them incredible and have still less faith in the "over 6000" Gaviões reported in a tribal list of 1861.

According to tradition the governador until his death at the beginning of the 'seventies admonished his people to remain at peace and prevented cattle lifting. He further ceded to the Neobrazilians diverse strips of land in return for meager compensation. The site of his erstwhile village, not far from the present Pqkóbye settlement of São Felix, still bears his name.

[a] Ribeiro, Memoria, §§ 62–64, 79; Roteiro, 27, 46; Descripção, 70.
[b] Carlota Carvalho, O Sertão, 43–45.
[c] J. F. Coelho, 76. [d] Marques, Apontamentos, "Indios." Aguiar, 53.

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619 175 chief was captured and the rest were abused to such an extent that part of them joined the Krahõ', while the remainder despondently sought safety in flight.

The second village of the Põrekamekra, as well as that of the equally peaceable "Poncatagê" (Põkateye, those of the steppe; an unidentifiable tribe), was visited by the bandeira of São Pedro de Alcantara and the allied Krahõ'. The Indians had fled, but persuaded by promises made to them through Cocrit, 364 of them consented to appear before the bandeira, only to be thrown into fetters amid horrible murders and other deeds of violence. Some were still able to flee, but 164 were captured, 130 of them—the bandeira leader's share—being branded with redhot irons and sold to Pará. Of this occurrence on July 24, 1815, Ribeiro, according to his express statement, was an eyewitness.

619 161 114 It is thus incomprehensible that four years later Pohl should have found 600 to 700 Põrekamekra peaceably residing in Cocal. Possibly he merely saw another group erroneously identified by Carvalho as Põrekamekra. Cunha Mattos, who mentions Cocal as late as 1824, described its residents as Cherente (?).[86]

The tribal name is not derived from "pure," burity leafstalk, as Ribeiro's orthography would suggest, but according to what the Krahõ' explicitly told me, from põre, a small falcon known to the Neobrazilians as caboré.

619 197 Pohl mentions a vocabulary recorded by him and refers readers to his Appendix, but I cannot find it in the two copies of his work accessible to me. Thus, I am acquainted with only the thirty words given by Martius here and there for purposes of comparison.[87]

Nevertheless, it is clear that, as with the neighboring Pukóbye and Krahõ', the speech represents the southeastern dialect of Timbira. They differed to their advantage in their amicable, peaceable character, stressed by both Ribeiro and Pohl, which reminds one of their northwestern neighbors, the Apinayé. [181]

11–13. The Canella

619 161 Neobrazilians unite the Kénkateye, Apą'nyekra and Rąmkõ'kamekra under the single head of Canellas. These tribes themselves, however, lack a common name for the three groups and recognize no closer affinity among themselves than between any of the three and the Krahõ' or the Čą'kamekra.

619 101 114 In the sertão no other tribes have ever been connected with that appellation. Martius, too, classes as Canellas finas only the Corume- and Capie-Crans (= Rąmkõ'-kamekra) and the Aponegi-Crans (= Apą'nyekra); possibly the Kénkateye were not yet in existence in his day.[88] On the other hand, Snethlage defines the concept quite differently, making it comprise: (a) Aponegikrãn = Temembó = Mannajo; (b) Kapiekrãn; (c) Sacamekrãn = Gamellas de Codo; (d) Korumekrãn; (e) Acobu; (f) Remkókamekrãn; (g) Aponyekrãn; (h) Kénkateye.[89]

This list evokes the following comments:

The Aponegikrãn are, indeed, identical with Aponyekrãn, or rather Apą'nyekra but not with the Temembó and, still less, with the Mannajo (= Amanayé). Kapiekrãn, Korumekrãn, and Remkókamekran are merely three distinct names for one tribe, the Canella of Ponto. The Sacamekrãn were quite distinct from the Gamella of Codó, in fact, were their bitter enemies. On the other hand, these Gamella, who are not Timbira at all, are identical with the Acobu (= Hakąpó).

In Les Capiekrans, Father Etienne Ignace gives misleading statements about the habitat of the Canella whose coastal origin he "proves" by their allegedly excessive

[86] Cunha Mattos, Chorographia, 38:386.
[87] Martius, Beiträge, vol. 2.
[88] *Ibid.*, 1:235.
[89] Snethlage, Nordostbras. Ind., 141.

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524 and they only rarely. The stilts are of burity leaf-stems and stepped so that the feet are at most 40 cm. above the ground. The part above the footrest is tied to the outside of the lower leg.

Cat's cradle.—Both young girls and young men make string figures, but those really conversant with cat's cradle are relatively few in number. I noticed ten distinct figures.

Dances.—The dances described above (p. 114 ff.) are the only social games of these Indians.

War and Peace

648 *Relations with outsiders.*—The Eastern Timbira are not nearly so amiable and
186 peaceable toward outsiders as are the Apinayé. The highest goal of their social
organization seems to have been to preclude any breach of internal peace, so that
● 181 intratribally theft is rare and murder almost unknown; but in former times such conduct was apparently permitted toward aliens—a probable correlate of their greater or lesser hostility toward virtually all neighboring tribes. Traces of this ancient attitude may occasionally be observed even today with reference to Neobrazilian neighbors, especially among the Krĩkatí and Pụkóbye. On the other hand, the mutual relations of the several tribes, though still far removed from a sense of national solidarity, have unquestionably improved. The point is simply that the native tribes no longer inspire one another with fear, while the latent animosity between Indians and Neobrazilians has remained uniform during the last hundred years or so.

175 At all events the Krahõ′ until 1809, the Rąmkõ′kamekra until 1814, the Krĩkatí
648 and Pụkóbye for about two decades after that, were all living in incessant feuds with both aboriginal and Neobrazilian neighbors.

721 Por qualquer ciume sobre limites de terras, sobre as caças, ou sobre os fructos de uma arvore, tornando-se implacaveis inimigos, fazem-se carnageas tão horrorosas, que chegam a destruir-se inteiramente.

(Through some jealousies over territorial boundaries, over hunting or the fruits of some tree, they become inexorable enemies and execute such horrible massacres as completely to destroy one another.)[m]

In the chapters dealing with conquest, colonization, and the history of the several tribes I have brought together details concerning these feuds (pp. 4 ff., 13 f.).

As for the Rąmkõ′kamekra specifically, their relations with neighboring groups were as follows:

648 The Guajajára to the northwest are recognized as ancient enemies, though details
721 as to former wars were no longer ascertainable. Possibly this animosity failed to assume extreme forms because the Rąmkõ′kamekra had no hankering for the forested territory of the Guajajára. These in turn never ventured out into the steppes, [186] dreading and abhorring the Rąmkõ′kamekra and indeed all the Timbira, who requited the sentiment with contempt. As late as 1901, during the Guajajára uprising, this opposition expressed itself in the readiness, not to say zeal, with which the Rąmkõ′kamekra and the Kre′pụ′mkateye marched against the insurgents. As previously noted, competition for the supply of arrow cane in the north at the Caxoeira da Canna Braba of the Mearim led to occasional feuds between the Rąmkõ′kamekra and the Krẽyé of Bacabal. According to Ribeiro, the Cą′kamekra to the northeast were bitter enemies until 1814, when they inflicted upon our tribe a defeat that drove it into the arms of the Neobrazilians. Later the two groups made peace and finally fused. The Gamella of Codó, farther northeastward, who were not

[m] Ribeiro, Memoria, § 9.

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Timbira, remained hostile until their extinction, to which the Rąmkõ'kamekra contributed their share.[202] The southern frontier witnessed fights with the Neobrazilians whose predecessors in that region are unknown. The Apą'nyekra to the west were not precisely hostile, but neither was there true friendship between these two Canella tribes, who in fact have not yet achieved that relationship.

Bravery.—Ribeiro, familiar with Timbira warfare through long years of personal experience, unreservedly bears witness to the great bravery of these Indians:

Fora-lhes algum tempo horrorosas as nossas armas de fogo, porem familiarizados com tudo o que nos diz respeito, até sabem que sem a bala ou chumbo, a mesma polvora não vale contra elles: e é isto tanto assim, que quando sentem haver semelhante falta, avançam destimidos para tiral-as das mãos aos soldados, o que tem muitas vezes acontecido. De braço a braço poucos homens apparecem que possem medir com elles a valentia; as mesmas indias não degeneram em robustesa, e já observamos uma que vindo prisioneira, quiz fugir levando debaixo do braço a sua sentinella, e o faria se não lhe tivessem acudido; era ella de bõa altura e tanto bem proporcionada que lhe chamavam nossos soldados a Lazan grande.

(Formerly our firearms inspired them with fear; but today, when they are familiar with everything concerning us, they even know that powder is impotent without bullets and shot, so that as soon as they note such deficiency they fearlessly advance, in order to snatch them [the weapons] out of the soldiers' hands, as has frequently happened. Man to man, there seem to be few men able to vie with them in point of bravery. Even the women are not inferior in robustness and we have seen one such brought in as a captive who tried to escape by dragging along her guard under her arm and would have succeeded if he had not received aid. She was of goodly stature and so well built that our soldiers dubbed her "the big sorrel mare.")[203]

And again:

Ha entre elles homens muito valorosos! Nos observamos em 1801 a coragem com que um gentio Capiekrans defendeu a sua liberdade contra doze soldados, que o surprehenderam quasi sem armas, e primeiro tiveram estes a crueldade de fazel-o em pedaços do que a gloria de prendel-o. Em 1807 observamos tambem a animozidade de um dos Timbiras das matas, que sahindo á certa emboscada ao meio de mais de cem homens nossos, que se distrahiam em differentes trabalhos, na occasião em que se estabeleceu o arrayal do Principe Regente, matou um delles, espancou outros, e retirou-se airosamente antes de poder ser ofendido.

(There are very brave men among them! In 1801 we observed the courage with which a Capiekrans [= Rąmkõ'kamekra] Indian defended his liberty against twelve soldiers who had surprised him almost unarmed and had rather the satisfaction of cruelly cutting him to pieces than the glory of capturing him. In 1807 we also observed the audacity of a Forest Timbira [= Cą'kamekra], who dashed from some ambush into the midst of over a hundred of our people employed with sundry tasks at the founding of the Arroyal do Principe Regente; he killed one man, attacked several others and dexterously withdrew before he could be made to suffer any injury.)[204]

At present the Timbira, weakened by defeat and disease, know that the overwhelming majority of their civilized neighbors are merely waiting for a pretext to pose as defenseless victims of Indian savagery, demanding corresponding coercive measures by officials and the government, or even to resort to such on their own initiative. Hence an Indian hesitates for a long time before reacting to Neobrazilian insults and threats, thus acquiring a character for "cowardice." But even nowadays the camel's back will break: not many years ago, in the presence of half a dozen people in front of a fazenda, the Rąmkõ'kamekra Wakái shot down a Neobrazilian with an arrow, when the man continued for a long time to vituperate the at first unresisting Indian and threaten him with death.

Tactics.—Against Neobrazilians the Timbira presumably applied surprise attacks from ambush, but against their own kind they were by no means afraid of open

[202] Nimuendajú, The Gamella, 8.
[203] Memoria, § 19.
[204] *Ibid.*, § 22.